



# The need for gender sensitive response to the effects of climate change: a step towards climate justice through science and technology

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## General Note



Article is recommended to print as color version in recycled paper. *Save Trees, Save Climate.*

Climate change and extreme weather affect men and women both, but its adverse effects are likely to be more acute for women, especially economically weak and marginalised rural women. Directly or indirectly village women are largely depends on agriculture and informal sectors for their sovereignty, which are vulnerable to extreme weather.

In almost all economies women's social roles, access to resources and information, and participation leave them disadvantaged. The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are different for women and men. Women from low-income communities, rural and tribal bear a heavier burden from the impacts of climate change because they are more reliant upon natural resources for survival or they inhabit areas with poor infrastructure. At the same time, women are key players to sustainability solutions. It is women who are responsible for food production and the collection of water and fuel wood, which makes them particularly aware of changing weather patterns that alter growing seasons, decrease crop yields and lower water levels. This knowledge is essential for adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Women in developing countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change because they are highly dependent on local and natural resources for their livelihood. Women charged with securing water, food and fuel for cooking and heating face the greatest

challenges. Women experience unequal access to resources and decision-making processes, with limited mobility in rural areas. It is thus important to identify gender-sensitive strategies that respond to these crises for women.

Climate change is expected to affect many sections of natural and man-made sectors; many of them are of particular relevance to the work and livelihoods of women. Women living in poverty are the most threatened by the dangers that stem from climate change. Rural women are not immune to these climate change threats. In rural communities women are largely dependent on natural resources and agriculture for their livelihoods. Climate change will mean that the supply of natural resources will be threatened. Agriculture may become less viable. Women are playing a significant role in the agriculture production and are facing high risks of loss from droughts, uncertain rainfall, floods and deforestation. These climatic hazards have already led to low production, food shortages and poor livelihoods. Climate change adds to water insecurity and shortage which in turn makes much of women's time for fetching water for domestic uses. Moreover water insecurity increases women's workload in subsistence farming. Given women's key role in agriculture, it is a fundamental for adaptation efforts to provide local climate information and enhance meteorological and climatological knowledge.

A climate justice approach amplifies the voices of those people who have done least to cause climate change, but who are affected most severely by it. It includes the poorest and most marginalized people world-wide who already suffer most from poverty, hunger, ill-health and injustice. Thus climate justice needs to incorporate a strong gender perspective. Gender inequities alone can motivate more women to lead in taking action, but women's leadership must address the entire range of climate issues as well as bringing a gender perspective to each of them.

The paper would attempt to highlight the need for a robust science communication strategy which can facilitate action on climate justice in creating a gender-conscious response to reduce the negative impacts of natural disasters on women, particularly in relation to their critical roles in provision of food, water and energy. Attempt would be made to emphasise the women farmers are the effective agents of change in relation to adaptation, mitigation and disaster reduction strategies through science and technology communication programme. It will be demonstrated that the sensitization programmes are the only source to develop their knowledge, skills, and experiences for shaping adaptation process for better livelihood. The paper would emphasis on the various approaches of creating awareness on the expected consequences and risks of climate change in agriculture; documentation of women's experiences of climate change impacts on agriculture, water, housing, fisheries and related livelihood issues, as well as feeding into the process of developing adaptation policies and strategies for local, state and national government for promoting gender equality. The paper will encompass the initiatives to involve women farmers in developing local-specific issues and reflecting a participatory approach to knowledge management through communication strategies. It would also elaborate how collaboration with the rural women's networks and SHG will help in creating community of practitioners.

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